

VZCZCXRO9449
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIK RUEHKUK RUEHMOS RUEHYG
DE RUEHBUL #2093/01 1301010
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 101010Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0100
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 5652
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2529
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5941
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1353
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2692
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 002093

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR AMEND AND HARRIMAN
OSD FOR BREZINSKI
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958:N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [SOCI](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: PRT/QAL I NOW: BADGHIS PROVINCE SECURITY OVERVIEW

¶1. (SBU) Summary. The Badghis province Director for of the National Security Directorate (NSD) Mehr Ali offered a provincial security overview to PRToff, including poppy eradication efforts, Taleban influence, the recent slaying of five medical workers, and the police and justice system. Although the current picture is one of relative tranquility, potential destabilizing factors include poppy production, the presence in Pashtun areas of former Taleban, and weak government, including inadequate and corrupt police and judiciary. End Summary.

Poppy and the economy

¶2. (SBU) At present, the security situation is stable. The economic situation, however, is troublesome and could become worse if there is a major drought. Many unoccupied youth are traveling to the south to work in poppy cultivation and distribution. There, they are susceptible to recruitment by anti-government elements including Taleban. Badghis youth also go to Iran where they become involved in the opium distribution network.

¶3. (SBU) Poppy destruction has occurred in Badghis, primarily in areas where provincial officials have talked with elders. There are areas, however, where significant poppy production continues. These include the districts of Ghormach and Jawand, which are geographically remote and where the provincial government has little influence. (Comment. While the Badghis governor in meetings with the PRT cites Deputy Interior Minister Daoud's claim that 80 percent of Badghis poppy cultivation has been destroyed, Mehr Ali believes the figure is exaggerated. He implied that the GoA was painting an overly-rosy picture of poppy elimination in the province. End Comment.)

¶4. (SBU) The provincial government has few resources to aid in poppy elimination. Particularly troubling is the absence of alternatives to poppy production. Those farmers

who have stopped growing poppy are now asking for assistance. The Afghan government and foreign countries have talked about helping those who cooperate in the GoA's campaign against poppy, but nothing has happened. Programs have not yet led to significant impact. Assistance and alternatives must be offered. (Note: The USAID Alternative Livelihoods and agriculture programs are working on several programs in Badghis. The Rebuilding Agriculture Markets Program has trained 20 Para-vets to operate private businesses providing basic animal health care to farmers and pastoralists. The Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), a five-year program aimed at north and west Afghanistan, will focus on developing the agriculture sector with activities that increase agriculture productivity and product variety for domestic consumption, and promote the agro and food processing industries to achieve added-value in Afghan agricultural production. End Note.)

15. (U) Badghis needs major development aid to develop infrastructure and get the economy moving. Up to now there have only been handouts. A weak economy will ultimately result in insecurity. (Note. The Spanish Agency for International Development has recently begun construction of major road, water, and hospital projects, and has pledged an additional 50 million Euros in assistance to Badghis over the next five years. Apart from USAID-funded schools and a few other projects, and small National Solidarity Project programs, however, little assistance has reached the districts outside of Qal I Now. End Note.)

Pashtuns and the Taleban

KABUL 00002093 002 OF 003

16. (SBU) Tajik-Pashtun relations are generally good in the province. The districts of Ghormach and Bala Murghab are the most problematic; they are largely Pashtun, and there is concern about ex-Taleban now residing in these areas and about anti-government Pashtun fleeing the conflict-ridden situation in the South to temporarily take refuge in Badghis. (Note. Badghis province as a whole is almost two-thirds Tajik and one-third Pashtun. There are also small numbers of Turkman, Uzbek, and Hazara. Ghormach and Bala Murghab are over 95 percent and 90 percent Pashtun, respectively. Under the Taleban, Mullah Badar from Bala Murghab served as a district governor in Badghis and Herat province before becoming governor of Badghis; Abdul Rahman from Ghormach served as governor of Ghor. Many Tajiks in Badghis, who suffered under the Taleban, are genuinely worried that ex-Taleban living in Bala Murghab, Ghormach, and Pashtun pockets in other districts of Badghis will lead a Taleban resurgence. End Note.)

Medical worker slayings

17. (SBU) NSD took over from the Afghan National Police the investigation of the April 10 execution of five staff at a medical clinic in Dari Bum in Qadis district. Six people, including the clinic guard, are in custody. (Note: On April 10, five Aghans—four Tajiks and a Turkman—were executed at the clinic. The guard, a Pashtun, was not harmed. End Note.) The guard confessed and implicated the others, who so far have not admitted guilt. Dari Bum is a Pashtun area at the crossroads of routes to Faryab and Ghor provinces and is a center for poppy cultivation and trafficking. One of the victims, a doctor, was related to a police officer involved in poppy eradication in the area, and was suspected by locals of having tipped off authorities on poppy fields. (Note: An NGO worker told PRToff that a few weeks earlier Danish NGO DACAAR, which also works in Qadis, was threatened and advised to leave Qadis district,

allegedly because local poppy growers are wary of outsiders who may inform on them. End Note.)

Warlords a reduced factor, but government weak

¶18. (SBU) During the fight against the Russians, and after the fall of the Taleban, two individuals exerting significant power in Badghis were Ismael Khan (the current Minister of Energy) and General Zahir Naibzata. (Note: Naibzata, a mujahadeen commander became a general after the fall of the Taleban. After a dispute with Khan, a former ally, his troops allegedly killed Khan's son. Naibzata died in a car accident last year; at the time he was a candidate for parliament. End Note.) Khan and Naibzata's family continue to have followers in Badghis, but lack the significant influence they once had. Although there are powerbrokers in communities throughout Badghis, none represents a significant threat to the government.

¶19. (SBU) The extension of governmental authority is constrained by district governors who are poor administrators with little experience, and who are generally corrupt. Power in the districts is exercised primarily by village elders. (Note: The governor has replaced some district sub-governors with people he considers honest. He states the replacements have themselves become corrupt; and he believes the problem is not individuals but a culture of corruption. End Note.)

KABUL 00002093 003 OF 003

An ineffective judicial system

¶10. (SBU) Badghis police have insufficient salaries and lack adequate equipment. Most are involved in smuggling and petty corruption. Similarly, the justice system is corrupt; cases are decided in favor of the party with the most money. Few cases enter the formal judicial system, the majority being of cases are resolved within the traditional justice system by elders.

¶11. (SBU) In Jawand last year there were over 80 murders (most involving personal or tribal disputes). The failure of the formal justice system to investigate and process these crimes undermines confidence in the provincial government.

Comment

¶1112. (SBU) Mehr Ali is a Baluch from Nimroz province. He appears to have the confidence of the governor and is generally considered competent and honest. He has a good working relationship with PRT intelligence officers. Mehr Ali talks disdainfully of the police and his relationship with chief of police Ghoulam Rasoul is strained. End Comment.

NEUMANN